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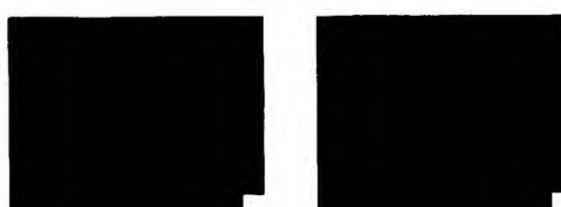
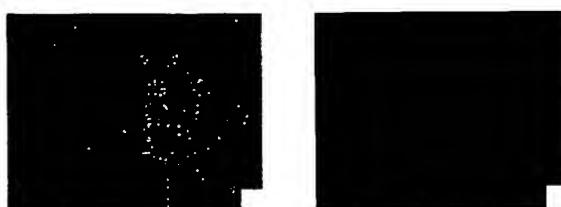
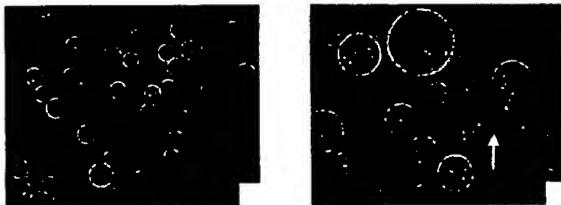
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(54) Title: PLURIPOTENT MAMMALIAN CELLS



(57) Abstract: The invention relates to a method of making pluripotent stem cells that does not involve the formation of early preimplantation embryos or fetal tissue. The method has general utility in the production of pluripotent stem cells from many mammalian species but has particular application in man where pluripotent stem cell production can be customized to particular human individual. The method involves the fusion of donor somatic or stem cells (or their karyoplasts) with cytoplasmic, membrane-delimited fragments of mammalian oocytes or zygotes. After the initial genomic reprogramming occurs, the cells can proliferate and thus multiply *in vitro* yielding a large number of autologous cells for cell therapy application. The result of this process is a cell population genetically identical to the somatic, differentiated cells derived from an individual patient. However, these cells are pluripotent in that upon application of specific growth factors, the cells are capable of differentiating into specific cell types as required by the sought clinical indication.

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Pluripotent Mammalian Cells

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to the field of stem cells and pluripotent cells. Specifically, the invention relates to the production of pluripotent cells for
5 transplantation and replacement of diseased or damaged tissue.

Background of the Invention

The replacement of damaged organs and tissues is a major problem in
10 health care. Most organs and tissues regenerate poorly in mammals and it is often not possible to repair damaged or diseased tissues with drugs. In a few cases, artificial materials, such as replacement joints or mechanical devices, such as renal dialysis machines, work well. Under other circumstances, organs or tissues from other individuals may be used. For instance, kidneys, hearts, and bone
15 marrow, have been successfully transplanted. There are three major disadvantages to transplantation. One is the very limited supply of such organs and tissues, being largely dependent on post mortem donation from accident victims. Another is the high cost of treatment (for example, presently, it costs about \$150,000 for a replacement heart). The third is the need to maintain
20 recipients on immunosuppressive drugs to avoid rejection due to the genetic differences between donor and recipient. Though the supply problem could be solved by the use of organs obtained from non-human, species of a similar size and physiology (e.g. the pig), immuno-incompatibility still remains a major problem. Xenotransplantation also poses the danger of introducing new viruses
25 which are pathogenic to humans and might emerge from long term association with an organ from a different species. For example, recent findings show that porcine endogenous retroviruses can infect human cells *in vitro*.

An alternative strategy is the use of "ready made" organs and tissues.
30 Much recent interest has centered on stem cells to accomplish this (reviewed by Vogel, *Science* 283:1432-1434 (1999)). These cells display a unique capacity to

self-renew, as well as to produce partially committed progenitor cells (reviewed by Fuchs and Segre, *Cell* 100:143-155 (2000); and by Weissman, *Cell* 100:157-168 (2000)). For example, mammalian bone marrow contains a range of hematopoietic (blood-forming) stem cells. This feature has been exploited
5 clinically in bone marrow transplantation, by allowing these stem cells to repopulate once the diseased cells have been removed. With new *in vitro* culture techniques, there may be even more ways of manipulating these stem cells. For example, signaling molecules, such as interleukins, may be used to isolate certain hematopoietic stem cell populations which then might be induced to proliferate,
10 providing enriched pools. Under appropriate culture conditions, these cells may mature into more restricted stem cell populations and differentiation factors applied to produce fully differentiated cells. In this way, factors such as erythropoietin and interleukins may be used to produce erythrocytes and granulocytes. When such populations of differentiated cells have been
15 reproducibly generated they will be useful clinically for transplantation. Adult neural stem cells show particular promise in these applications because of their ability to proliferate in culture without loss of developmental potential. Such cells have been shown to restore neurological function in the mouse (Snyder *et al.*, *Adv. Neurol.* 72:121-132 (1997) and rat (Zhang *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 96:4089-4094 (1999)) central nervous systems.
20

Although they are not yet completely understood, the mechanisms by which stem cells are programmed to differentiate into different cell lineages may allow opportunities for manipulation. It has been observed that stem cells of one type may, in some instances, generate cells of a completely different lineage.
25 Thus, neural stem cells can generate hematopoietic stem cells when transplanted into mice that have been irradiated to eliminate their own blood stem cells (Bjornson *et al.*, *Science* 283:534-537 (1999)). Similarly, cells capable of generating functional astrocyte-like cells (Azizi *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 95: 3908-3913 (1998); Kopen *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 96:10711-30 10716 (1999)) and muscle (Ferrari *et al.*, *Science* 279:1528-1530 (1998)) have

been reported in human bone marrow stromal cell preparations. From these observations, it appears that stem cells can be reprogrammed under the correct conditions.

The most versatile of the stem cells are mouse embryonic stem (ES) or 5 embryonic germ (EG) cells. These cells are obtained from early mouse embryos or primordial germ cells, respectively. They proliferate well in culture and differentiate into adult cell types, (Evans *et al.*, *Nature* 29:154-156 (1981); Matsui *et al.*, *Nature* 353:750-751 (1991)) including the germ cells, when transplanted into host embryos. Transplanting the stem cells into a host embryo, thus 10 propagates their genotype to succeeding generations. These cells, especially ES cells, have proved extremely valuable to basic and applied research. Gene manipulation techniques work particularly well with these cells and the addition of new, sometimes very large gene constructs, or the replacement and/or modification of endogenous genes can be affected with surprising ease (Bradley 15 *et al.*, *Bio/Technology* 10:534-539 (1992)). Most importantly, these modifications can be made without affecting the developmental potential of the cells so that new lines of transgenic mice can be made. The ability to perform subtle gene alterations or replacements would be extremely useful in livestock species and laboratory animals (in addition to mice).

Surprisingly, despite many attempts, cells with such properties have never 20 been isolated from other, non-mouse mammalian species. Those "pluripotent" cells which have been described have never been shown to contribute successfully to the germ line (e.g. Notorianni *et al.*, *J. Reprod. Fert. Suppl.* 43:255-260 (1991); Saito, *et al.*, *Roux's Arch. Dev. Biol.* 201:134-141 (1992); 25 Handyside, *et al.*, *Roux Arch Dev Biol* 196:185-190 (1987); Cherny, *et al.*, *Theriogenology* 41:175 (1994); Van Stekelenburg-Hamers *et al.*, *Mol. Reprod. Dev.* 40:444-454 (1995); Smith *et al.*, WO 94/24274 (1994); Evans *et al.*, WO 90/03432 (1990); Wheeler *et al.*, WO 94/26889 (1994); Wheeler *et al.*, WO 94/26884 (1994). Though there have been recent reports of human cells having 30 several properties of ES cells (Thomson *et al.*, *Science* 282:1145-1147 (1998);

Reubinoff *et al.*, *Nature Biotechnology* 18:399-404 (2000)) and EG cells (Shambrott *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 95:13726-13731 (1998)), and of human ES cells being capable of forming neural cells *in vitro* (Reubinoff *et al.*, *supra*), these cells must be obtained by killing early embryos, and so will always 5 present ethical problems.

A major problem with the strategies discussed so far, including those that utilize human ES or EG cells, is that of immunological incompatibility. While this problem might be avoided by using donor tissue or stem cells from the same individual who is to receive the transplant, as in a skin transplant for burn 10 patients, the amount of such tissue or stem cells is often very limited or impossible to obtain. An ideal solution would be to create the required stem cells from the somatic cells of the individual patient. Since these cells would be autologous, there would be no issues of rejection within that individual. Several routes for achieving this objective are described below. In general, the production 15 of stem cells from an existing somatic cell will require reprogramming of a differentiated, adult cell.

The degree to which the differentiated, adult cell is reprogrammed must be considered. For example, adult stem cells have a more restricted developmental potential. They are multipotential, and thus are capable of being 20 induced to differentiate along many, but not all, cell lineages characteristic of the adult animal. ES and EG cells are pluripotent and therefore capable of differentiating into many if not all the cell types characteristic of an adult (with the exception of trophectoderm tissue). Only the fertilized zygote, which can give rise directly to all cell types comprising the developing embryo and therefore the 25 adult animal, is totipotent. To prepare adult, differentiated cells for use in transplantation to regenerate diseased tissues or organs, it is not necessary to produce a totipotent cell. Instead pluripotent cells have enough potential to be induced into any type of cell lineage needed.

The differentiated state in somatic cells is very stable due to dynamic 30 interactions between components of the nucleus and those in the cytoplasm (Blau

and Baltimore, *J. Cell Biol.* 112:781-783 (1991). This inhibits reprogramming of the nuclear genes. Reprogramming can be achieved, though, by exposing the nucleus to a new cytoplasm. Experimentally induced fusion of two different cell types has demonstrated nuclear reprogramming (for review, see Ringertz and 5 Savage, *Cell Hybrids*, Academic Press (1976)). In these experiments, cells from different species are often used in order to provide suitable molecular markers. After the fused cells, called heterokaryons, are formed, reprogramming of at least one nucleus usually occurs. This reflects the influence of trans-acting cytoplasmic factors from one of the original cells, causing the other nucleus to be 10 reprogrammed. For example, fusion of an EG cell and a thymocyte caused several thymocyte specific genes to be down regulated, indicating a possible dominance over the nucleus of the differentiated thymocyte by the more pluripotent cytoplasm of the EG cell (Tada *et al.*, *EMBO J.* 16:6510-6520 (1997)). Unfortunately, heterokaryons are not an option for producing stem cells for 15 transplantation because they do not divide, and therefore cannot be propagated into a sufficient number of cells. Instead, heterokaryons have a variable and often reduced number of chromosomes from each donor, which mingle within the same nuclear membrane.

As an alternative to fusing complete cells, success has been reported in 20 reconstructing cells after the fusion of cytoplasts and karyoplasts, each prepared from cultured, differentiated cells (Hightower *et al.*, *Proc Natl Acad Sci* 80:5310-5314 (1983); Lucas and Kates, *Cell* 7:397-405 (1976)). Using fractions of the cytoplasm or nucleus as cytoplasts and karyoplasts, respectively, avoids the mixed genotype problems described above. Unfortunately, these methods have 25 not resulted in the generation of cells that can proliferate for long periods of time in culture.

Finally, a comprehensive reprogramming has been achieved through the technique of somatic cell nuclear transfer leading to the generation of adult animals from an adult cell nucleus transferred into an enucleated oocyte. This 30 technique has been demonstrated in sheep, goats, cows, pigs and mice (Wilmut

et al., *Nature* 385:810-813 (1997); Kato *et al.*, *Science* 282:2095-2098 (1998); Wells *et al.*, *Biol. Reprod.* 60:996-1005 (1999); Kubota, *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 97:990-995 (2000); Wakayama *et al.*, *Nature* 394:369-374 (1998); Wakayama and Yanagimachi, *Nature Genetics* 22:127-128 (1999)). This 5 technology is the subject of many issued patents and patent submissions. The transfer of a nucleus to an enucleated oocyte of the same species generates a "reconstructed embryo" which can be implanted into a foster mother and taken to term. This process is called "reproductive cloning," because it results in a completely reproduced organism. A variation, "therapeutic cloning," has been put 10 forth as a way to provide specific cell types customized to individual human patients for uses such as replacement or supplementation of diseased cells, tissue or organs.

Therapeutic cloning has been proposed (reviewed by Colman and Kind, Trends in Biotechnology, 18, 192-196, 2000) to produce cloned embryos from 15 which human embryonic stem (ES) cells can be made. The specific human ES cells could then be cultured *in vitro* and induced to differentiate, instead of implanted into a foster mother as in reproductive cloning. Although this technology is currently being perfected, a major hurdle is the provision of sufficient human oocytes as nuclear transfer recipients. Nuclear transfer is still 20 a very inefficient procedure. An estimated 200 oocytes are needed to produce one human ES cell line. Therefore huge logistical and ethical problems are present.

It would be advantageous if non-human recipient cells were available, instead. Recently, using nuclear donors from a variety of species in combination with enucleated bovine oocytes (Dominko *et al.*, *Biol. Reprod.* 6:1496-1502 25 (1999); also see WO 98/07841 (1998)), the inventors have shown that reconstructed embryos can develop at least to the blastocyst stage. However, it is not clear whether these embryos or cells derived from them retain any further proliferative potential. A potential barrier to further proliferation might be that mitochondria of the recipient oocyte are found in the animal resulting from 30 nuclear transfer. Mitochondria from one genome appear to be incompatible with

a nuclear genome from even closely related species, thus resulting in the non-viability of the "cybrids" (hybrid cells containing the nucleus from one species and the cytoplasm from another; reviewed in Colman and Kind *supra*). The relative ratios of oocyte cytoplasm to nuclear donor cell cytoplasm may effect this
5 problem.

The patent application WO 99/45100, entitled "Embryonic or Stem Cell Lines Produced by Cross Species Nuclear Transplantation" attempted to address these problems by producing an embryo from cross species nuclear transplantation, from which pluripotent cells are then produced. This procedure
10 allows a much higher relative contribution of donor cytoplasm to the hybrid, thus, greatly enhancing the long term proliferative potential of the hybrids formed. To date, though, there have been no reports of survival of cross species, nuclear transfer (NT) embryos beyond the blastocyst stages (100-200 cells). This short survival time could be because most if not all the mitochondria are maternally
15 derived in NT embryos (Sheils *et al.*, *Nature* 399:316-317 (1999)). Long term survival of most hybrid cells made from combinations of the cytoplasts of one species and the nucleus from a different species cannot usually survive in the absence of mitochondria from the cytoplasm donor (Kenyon and Morales, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 94:9131-9135 (1997)).

20 The present invention solves this problem and provides the means for making "personalized" tissue and organs for patients in need thereof. The invention, hence, solves the problems of heteroplasmic incompatibility as well as the risk of cross-species contamination that is posed to the society at large by xeno-transplantation.

25

Summary of the Invention

The invention is of the production of pluripotent cells using cytoplasm fragments obtained from either whole enucleated oocytes or whole, enucleated
30 fertilized zygotes. These cytoplasts may be obtained from species which do not

present insurmountable financial or ethical hurdles to their collection. The cytoplasm fragments are fused with nuclear donors of either the same species or another species. These nuclear donors are either whole cells or karyoplasts. Once the cytoplasm and nuclear donor are fused, the hybrid is maintained in an 5 undifferentiated state, so that the genetic information of the nuclear donor is reprogrammed into that of an undifferentiated cell. When this is achieved, the hybrid can then be induced to differentiate into the desired cell type. Ultimately, this will allow the production of differentiated cells of any cell type, in any species, which can be used for transplants.

10 The invention allows for minimization of heteroplasmic incompatibility in tissue and organ transplantation by using only a fragment of the oocyte cytoplasm to induce dedifferentiation of a nuclear donor, instead of the entire enucleated oocyte. Additional steps, such as inactivation of the oocyte mitochondrial replication and supplementation with mitochondria of the nuclear 15 donor species, are also used to avoid the problems of cross-species nuclear transfer, without the ethical problems of producing an embryo. Unexpectedly, this method also addresses the difficulties encountered in deriving embryonic stem cells from mammalian species apart from mice and possibly some primates, see US 5,843,780 (1998), since the cells generated by this new method may have 20 properties similar to animal ES cells, in that they will be pluripotent.

25 In a first aspect, the invention provides for the production of a pluripotent cell which is the result of the fusion of a mammalian cytoplasm fragment derived from an oocyte or fertilized zygote with a cell or a karyoplast (the "nuclear donor") taken from any mammalian species. The cytoplasm donor can be from any mammalian species, but preferably from one of mouse, rat, rabbit, sheep, goat, pig, or most preferably, cow. It is an object of the invention to provide an economical and ethical means of pluripotent cell production from humans where human oocytes or embryos are not needed to derive such cells. However, a preferred method, in the absence of these concerns, is where the donor karyoplast 30 and cytoplasm fragments are obtained from the same species.

In a second aspect of the invention, the viability of mitochondria in the cytoplasm are compromised by the use of inhibitors of mitochondrial function or replication. Alternatively, cytoplasts which contain congenital mitochondrial lesions are chosen.

5 In a third aspect of the invention, the mitochondrial content of the cells produced in the first and second aspect of the invention is supplemented by the introduction of mitochondria, preferably from the same source as the donor. Most preferably, the introduced mitochondria are introduced by fusion of the cells with platelets or enucleated lymphocytes from the same source as the donor.

10 However, mitochondria prepared according to standard procedures from any of a variety of cell types may be used. Optionally, such mitochondrial populations would be microinjected into cells of the invention.

In a fourth aspect of the invention, donor cells produced according to the first, second or third aspects of the invention are transfected with genes encoding proteinaceous factors whose normal roles is to modulate transcription and/or replication of mitochondrial DNA. The added genes are preferably obtained from the same species providing the cytoplasm.

In a fifth aspect of the invention, reprogramming of the nucleus in cells prepared according to the first, second, third, or fourth aspects of the invention is facilitated by the transfection of the cells with genes whose products can enhance chromatin remodelling. The genes can be stably integrated into the cells or preferably, transiently transfected.

In a sixth aspect of the invention, reprogramming in cells made according to aspects one, two, three or four of the invention, is facilitated by the use of chemical or biologically derived agents known to cause gene reactivation. Examples of such reagents are trichostatin A, or other histone deacetylation inhibitors. Furthermore, compounds which catalyze histone deacetylation such as butyrate, are also used to promote gene activation by loosening nucleosome-nucleosome interactions which allow access of transcription factors.

In a seventh aspect of the invention, cells made according to any one of the above aspects of the invention are propagated in culture under conditions designed to discourage differentiation. Such conditions may include the addition of various media supplements (e.g., LIF, steel factor) as well as growth (e.g., bFGF, GCT44).

An eighth aspect of the invention provides for the differentiation of cells cultured according to the seventh aspect of the invention, into desired cell types. Preferably, such differentiation is achieved by the addition of cocktails of growth factors and other components formulated to ensure the differentiation into specific cell types.

In a ninth aspect of the invention, differentiation of cells made according to aspects one to six of the invention, is assisted by the transfection of genes encoding transcription factors or other specific gene activators.

A tenth aspect of the invention provides for transfection of genes either before (in primary cell cultures), after (in pluripotent cell cultures) hybrid-derived cells are produced, or after hybrid-derived cells are induced to differentiate. Preferred genes are those designed to correct genetic defects or supply cells with the capacity to produce a desired protein, enzyme, enzyme product, cellular component, etc., that may be activated constitutively, upon induction by a trans-activator, or upon transplant into the appropriate milieu. It is the object of the invention for such genetic modifications to be either targeted or heterologous.

In an eleventh aspect of the invention, a method is provided for selecting fusion products on a background of potentially unfused cells. Similarly, a method is provided for selecting hybrid cells with a normal karyotype against a background of aneuploid, hybrid cells. The method utilizes cell tracker probes and nucleic acids encoding fluorescent proteins in order to mark and identify the cytoplasmic fragments, nuclear donors cells, and nucleic acids of the invention by color and/or fluorescence. Selection of fused products and cells having normal karyotypes is accomplished using a cell sorter device. This method allows for enrichment of fused cells and fused cells having normal karyotypes.

Brief Description of the Figures

Figure 1. Fragmented bovine cytoplasts produced by vortexing in cytochalasin B. Cytoplasts containing the endogenous chromosomes have been
5 removed using micromanipulation with Hoechst 33342 fluorescent dye.

Figure 2. DIC (A) and epifluorescent (B) micrographs of fragmented bovine cytoplasts following fusion with porcine fetal fibroblasts. Reconstructed hybrid cells were cultured for 18 hours after fusion without receiving an activation stimulus. Total magnification 200X.

10 Figure 3. Micrographs of fixed reconstructed cell hybrids after 48 hours of culture with BrdU. (A) Hybrids were fixed using 50 mM glycine in 70% ethanol, pH 2.0 and labeled with FITC-conjugated anti-BrdU monoclonal antibody. (B) The same hybrids in (A) were counterstained with DAPI to visualize the nuclei. Total magnification 200X.

15 Figure 4. DIC (A) and epifluorescent (B) micrographs of fragmented bovine cytoplasts following fusion with porcine fetal fibroblasts. Reconstructed hybrid cells were cultured for 7 days after fusion and received an activation stimulus after fusion. The hybrids were cultured in SOF in 30 µl drops under mineral oil without fibroblast feeder cells. Total magnification 200X.

20 Figure 5. Phase contrast (A), DIC (B) and epifluorescent (C) micrographs of fragmented bovine cytoplasts following fusion with porcine fetal fibroblasts. Reconstructed hybrid cells were cultured for 7 days after fusion and received an activation stimulus after fusion. The hybrids were cultured in SOF in 30 µl drops under mineral oil with fibroblast feeder cells. Total magnification 400X in (A)
25 and 200X in (B) and (C).

Figure 6. Characterization of cytoplasts from bovine MII arrested oocytes.
(A) Cytoplasts fractionated from 3 bovine oocytes. (B) Arrow indicates a lysed cytoplasm which occurs in 1-3 of cytoplasts. (C) Size comparison between an intact zona free oocyte and fractionated cytoplasts. (D) Distribution of
30 mitochondria labeled with MitoTracker before fractionation. (E) Distribution of

mitochondria after fractionation. (F) Same cytoplasts in (E) labeled with non-specific DNA dye showing distribution of RNA.

Figure 7. FACS analysis of hybrid cell sort with selection for Hoechst 3342. Two peaks are shown. Peak D corresponds to monucleate hybrid cells.

5 Peak B corresponds to multinucleate hybrid cells.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

The invention relates to the preparation of pluripotent cells which can be
10 directed to differentiate into different cell lineages. These pluripotent cells are produced by a method in which an oocyte or fertilized zygote is fragmented to produce cytoplasts which are then fused with somatic or stem cells (or their karyoplasts) from a different species.

The present invention is directed to the production of pluripotent cells
15 using cytoplasm fragments of enucleated oocytes. One embodiment of the invention is the cytoplasm fragments of enucleated oocytes which can participate in reprogramming of a differentiated cell. Another embodiment of the invention is a method of making these cytoplasm fragments of enucleated oocytes. A third embodiment is a pluripotent cell obtained using oocyte cytoplasm fragments. A
20 fourth embodiment of the invention is a method to make pluripotent cells using oocyte cytoplasm fragments. A detailed description enabling each of these embodiments follows.

In the description that follows, a number of terms conventionally used in
the field are utilized extensively. In order to provide a clear and consistent
25 understanding of the specification and the claims, and the scope to be given such terms, the following definitions are provided.

"Autologous" implies identical nuclear genetic identity between donor cells or tissue and those of the recipient.

"Cytoplasm fragment," with regard to the invention, is a fragment of an
30 oocyte or fertilized zygote which is less than the entire cytoplasm of the oocyte

and lacks a nucleus or nuclear DNA material. A cytoplasm fragment is also enclosed by a membrane, either the plasma membrane or an artificial membrane. Cytoplasts can also be made of other non-oocyte or zygote cells.

"Embryonic stem (ES)" cells are rapidly dividing cultured cells isolated
5 from cultured embryos which retain in culture the ability to give rise in vivo to all the cell types which comprise the adult animal including the germ cells.

"Embryonic germ (EG)" cells are generated by the culture of primordial germ cells taken from later stage embryos which retain in culture the ability to give rise in vivo to all the cell types which comprise the adult animal including
10 the germ cells.

"Hybrid cell" refers to the cell immediately formed by the fusion of a unit of cytoplasm formed from the fragmentation of an oocyte or zygote with an intact somatic or stem cell or alternatively a derivative portion of said somatic or stem cell, containing the nucleus.

15 "Karyoplast" refers to a fragment of a cell containing the chromosomes and nuclear DNA. A karyoplast is surrounded by a membrane, either the nuclear membrane or other natural or artificial membrane.

"Multipotent" implies that a cell is capable, through its progeny, of giving rise to several different cell types found in the adult animal.

20 "Nuclear transfer" refers to the technique whereby the nucleus/genome of an oocyte, egg, or zygote is substituted by a nucleus taken from (usually) a somatic or stem cell.

"Oocyte" refers to the female germ cell during its progression through meiosis. An MII oocyte refers to an oocyte at the second meiotic metaphase stage
25 of meiosis; an activated oocyte is an MII oocyte which has been activated either by sperm or any of a variety of artificial stimuli, to complete meiosis.

"Pluripotent" implies that a cell is capable, through its progeny, of giving rise to all the cell types which comprise the adult animal including the germ cells.

30 Embryonic stem and embryonic germ cells are pluripotent cells under this definition.

A "reconstructed embryo" is an embryo made by the fusion of an enucleated oocyte with a somatic or ES or EG cell; alternatively, the somatic cell nucleus can be injected into the oocyte.

"Stem cell" describes cells which are able to regenerate themselves and
5 also to give rise to progenitor cells which ultimately will generate cells developmentally restricted to specific lineages.

"Somatic cells" describes all types of cell apart from germ cells, embryonic stem and germ cells (see definitions below), which are present in, or derived from, the embryonic, fetal and adult stages of development.

10 "Totipotent" implies that a cell is capable, through its progeny, of giving rise to all the cell types which comprise the adult animal including the germ line, as well as any cell types required to nurture the growing embryo and fetus (e.g., trophoblast tissue). In mammals, only the zygote and (in some species) early blastomeres qualify as totipotent. When the term is used to describe a nucleus,
15 it implies that the nucleus is capable, given the appropriate cytoplasmic environment, of supporting the developmental program described above.

"Transgenic" animal or cell refers to animals or cells whose genome has been subject to technical intervention including the addition, removal, or modification of genetic information.

20 "Zygote" refers to a fertilized one-cell embryo.

Production of Cytoplasm Fragments

The species used for cytoplasm donors will vary depending on the
25 reprogramming potential of cytoplasts from a particular species and on the cost of obtaining oocytes from it. Successful production of live offspring using somatic cell nuclear transfer demonstrates that the cytoplasm of oocytes from cows, mice, sheep, goats, and pigs are capable of conferring totipotency onto a single nucleus from a somatic donor cell of the same species. *In vivo* matured
30 oocytes from these species may be recovered from the oviducts of either naturally

or artificially synchronized female donor animals (techniques are widely known to those skilled in the art; instructions for many procedures are documented in *Transgenic Animal Technology: A Laboratory Handbook*, Pinkert, C.A., ed., Academic Press, San Diego, CA (1994)).

5 Alternatively, oocytes obtained from human and livestock species may be matured *in vitro*. In the case of livestock, antral follicles present in ovaries obtained at slaughter are aspirated and immature oocytes are induced to undergo *in vitro* maturation by incubation with an appropriate mixture of culture medium, nutrients, and hormones (reviewed by Trounse *et al.*, *Theriogenology* 41:57-66
10 (1994)). Transvaginal oocyte recovery (TVOR (Pieterse *et al.*, *Theriogenology* 30:751-762 (1988) and *in vitro* maturation (Susko-Parrish, *et al.*) have been demonstrated for bovine oocytes from live cows or heifers, though *in vivo* matured bovine oocytes are expensive and difficult to collect from the animal.
15 Because it is known that there are differences in the viability of embryos depending on whether the oocytes are matured *in vivo* or *in vitro*, if *in vivo*-derived oocytes are required, they can readily be obtained from murine, rabbit, sheep, goat, pig, and primate species. Preferably, oocytes are obtained from a source in which the starting material can be screened and controlled for the absence of specific known pathogens. Examples of such animals include various
20 types of cattle, ungulates (ie. sheep, goats, pigs, horses) lagomorphs (ie. rabbits), and rodents.

Three major populations of oocytes can be used for cytoplasm preparation:
1) unactivated, high MPF, MII arrested oocyte cytoplasts, 2) activated, low MPF (interphase) oocytes, and 3) aged, unactivated, low MPF oocyte cytoplasts. Each
25 of these cell cycle stages has been shown to have certain advantages for reprogramming (Barnes *et al.*, *Mol. Reprod. Dev.* 36:33-41 (1993); Campbell *et al.*, *Biol Reprod* 49:933-942 (1993)). A preferred embodiment involves the use of high MPF oocytes for cytoplasts. Activation of oocytes prior to cytoplasm preparation can be accomplished using a variety of established protocols,
30 including *inter alia*, electrical pulse, ionomycin/DMAP, disintegrin, calcium

ionophore, cycloheximide, strontium, sperm factor, and sperm (reviewed by Campbell, *Cloning 1:3-15* (1999)).

The endogenous maternal genomic DNA in the nucleus is removed either before or after cytoplasm production. The nucleus is removed using either 5 micromanipulation or bulk removal procedures (i.e. centrifugation in an appropriate gradient such as Percholl® in the presence of a microfilament inhibitor such as cytochalasin B).

In a preferred method for cytoplasm production, the zona pellucida is removed by incubation with an effective concentration of an appropriate enzyme 10 (e.g., pronase) or acidified Tyrodes solution. Alternatively, the zona pellucida may be removed by mechanical means using micromanipulation, followed by incubation in an appropriate concentration of a microfilament inhibitor such as cytochalasin B and vortexing. The speed and duration of the vortexing are determined such that optimal cytoplasm size is achieved. For example, speed 10 15 on a Vortex Genie 2 for 7 seconds for porcine or rabbit oocytes (see Ex. 1 and 2), or max speed on a Vortex Genie 2 for 3 minutes for bovine oocytes (see Ex. 3) can be utilized. Alternative methods of cytoplasm production include micropipetting in the presence of an effective concentration of microfilament inhibitor as well as repeated mechanical aspiration of specific amounts of 20 cytoplasm (e.g., enough to yield 10-50 cytoplasm fragments per oocyte), using micromanipulation procedures or slicing the cytoplasm in the presence of a microfilament inhibitor using a suitable tool.

Enucleated oocyte cytoplasm fragments are fractions of an oocyte constituting less than the entire cytoplasm. Mammalian oocytes are fractionated 25 into enucleated cytoplasts of an appropriate size such that enough intracellular material is maintained in each fragment to induce nuclear envelope breakdown and chromosome condensation of the nuclear donor in the production of pluripotent hybrid cells. On the other hand, the amount of intracellular material in each cytoplasm should not be so high that the number of cytoplasts available 30 from one oocyte is limited to one. For the most efficient use of donor oocytes,

it is preferred that more than 10 and up to 50 cytoplasm fragments are obtained from the fractionation of each oocyte. It is anticipated that smaller volume cytoplasts will present fewer problems of mitochondrial incompatibility. While cytoplasm fragments of various sizes can be used, a general size range is about 120
5 μm to about 5 μm in diameter. In a preferred embodiment, the size of the cytoplasm fragments can range from about 100 μm to about 10 μm in diameter. In another preferred embodiment the size of the cytoplasm fragments can range from about 90 μm to about 20 μm in diameter. In another preferred embodiment, the size of the cytoplasm fragments can range from about 80 μm to about 30 μm
10 in diameter. In another preferred embodiment, the size of the cytoplasm fragments can range from about 70 μm to about 30 μm in diameter. In another embodiment, the size of the cytoplasm fragments can range from about 60 μm to about 30 μm in diameter. In another preferred embodiment, the size of the cytoplasm fragments can range from about 60 μm to about 20 μm in diameter. In more preferred
15 embodiment, the size of the cytoplasm fragments can range from about 50 μm to about 10 μm in diameter. In a more preferred embodiment, the size of the cytoplasm fragments can range from about 20 μm to about 30 μm in diameter. In the most preferred embodiment, the size of the cytoplasm fragments is about 25 μm in diameter. Cytoplasts can be separated according to their size by size
20 fractionation in an appropriate gradient or by using a cell sorter, and cytoplasts of different diameters examined as recipients in hybrid construction. On average, between 15 and 50 cytoplasts are produced by a single oocyte.

The viability of cytoplasts is expected to be 24-48 hours based on enucleated cytoplasm produced from cultured somatic cells (Goldman *et al.*, *Proc
25 Natl Acad Sci USA* 70:750-754 (1973)). Some loss of cytoplasts is expected due to small size or lysis. Distribution of cellular organelles and other cell components is expected to be uniform among cytoplasts (Cohen *et al.*, *Theriogenology* 43:129-140 (1995)).

Production of Nuclear Donor

In principal, any differentiated somatic or stem cell can be used for hybrid production. Preferred cell types include those that have been shown to be reprogrammable in nuclear transfer. Somatic cells that have been used for 5 nuclear transfer (NT) to produce live offspring include skin fibroblasts (goats: Baguisi *et al.*, *Nature Biotech* 17:456-461 (1999)), leukocytes (cattle: Galli *et al.*, *Cloning* 1:161-170 (1999)), granulosa and cumulus cells (mice: Wakayama *et al.*, *Nature* 394:369-374 (1998); cattle: Wells *et al.*, *Biol Reprod* 60:996-1005 (1999)), oviductal epithelium (cattle: Kato *et al.*, *Science* 282:2095-2098 (1998)), 10 mammary gland cells (sheep: Wilmut *et al.*, *Nature* 385, 810-813 (1997)), and fetal fibroblasts (Schneike *et al.*, *Science* 278:2130-2133 (1997)). Other non-limiting examples of cells suitable for NT include keratinocytes, hepatocytes, respiratory epithelial cells, neuronal cells, C34+ stem cells, and granulocytes. Further preferred cell types are those easily obtained by non-invasive biopsy 15 procedures. Examples include skin fibroblasts and mononuclear peripheral blood cells. It would be within the skill of the ordinary practitioner to determine other cells suitable as nuclear donors within the scope of the invention.

Cells are harvested from the donor organism using routine biopsy and cell isolation procedures. Cells are either used fresh or cultured and allowed to 20 proliferate *in vitro* to amplify them for use and cryopreservation. In a preferred embodiment the cell cycle stage of the nuclear donor is matched to the cell cycle stage of the recipient cytoplasm. For metaphase I cytoplasts (high MPF) it is preferred that the cells are synchronized in G0/G1 so that upon activation the appropriate nuclear ploidy is maintained due to appropriate DNA replication. 25 The cells may be synchronized in G0/G1 by various methods available in the art, such as culture in low serum concentration, culture in the presence of trichostatin A (a histone deacetylase inhibitor), or by contact inhibition.

If karyoplasts are used as nuclear donors, they may be prepared by various methods from interphase cells. For example, karyoplasts can be prepared by

centrifuging a cell suspension through a 12.5-25% non-linear Ficoll density gradient (Ohara *et al.*, *J. Immunol. Meth.* 45:239-248 (1981)) in the presence of 10 µg/ml cytochalasin B. The fraction corresponding to 17.5-25% Ficoll is collected and the karyoplasts are purified further using a continuous BSA (bovine serum albumin) sedimentation gradient.

5 If the donor nucleus is derived from a cytoplasm-deficient karyoplast, then mitochondrial supplementation is preferred. Methods for introducing mitochondria into mitochondrial deficient cells are available in the art (King and Attardi, *Meth. Enzymol.* 264:304-334 (1996)). For example, enucleated cells may
10 be fused to reconstructed hybrids. Preferred enucleated cells are those naturally occurring such as blood platelets. In a more preferred embodiment, the enucleated mitochondrial donor cells are blood platelets from the same individual as the karyoplast nuclear donor.

15 **Production of hybrid cells (HDCs)**

There are many techniques available in the art that can be used to induce fusion of one cell type to another, even across species (for example, rat-mouse: Krondahl *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 74:606-609 (1977); human-mouse:
20 Hightower *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 80:5310-5314 (1983); chicken-human: Rao, *Exp. Cell Res.* 102:25-30 (1976); chicken-hamster: Dubbs and Kit, *Som. Cell Gen.* 2:11-19 (1976); chicken-rat: Scheer *et al.*, *J. Cell. Biol.* 97:1641-1643 (1983)). Examples of these cell fusion methods include, *inter alia*, the use
25 of inactivated Sendai virus, electrical stimulation, polyethylene glycol (PEG), high pH-low osmolarity medium, hemagglutinin (HA), and liposomes. A preferred method is one that maximizes the efficiency of hybrid production without adversely affecting the viability of the hybrids formed. For example, exposure to an optimal concentration of PEG in culture medium or exposure to electrical stimulation using optimal parameters in an optimal medium. The
30 parameters for the preferred embodiment for PEG mediated fusion is

accomplished by exposing the cells/karyoplasts and cytoplasts to about 40-50% PEG for about one minute. Using these conditions, virtually all cytoplasts that are in contact with the donor cell or karyoplast will fuse.

The most preferred embodiment involves electrical fusion. Electrical
5 fusion is performed by placing the cytoplasts and cells/karyoplasts in a appropriate fusion medium in a chamber between 2 electrodes attached to a high voltage DC pulse generator. Fusion is induced by applying one or multiple high voltage/short duration DC pulses. A preferred method is where the fusion medium consists of 0.3 M manitol, 0.05 mM MgCl₂, 0.1 mg/ml polyvinyl
10 alcohol, the DC voltage is 1.25 kV/cm, and the couplets are allowed to equilibrate in the fusion medium for 10 minutes prior to fusion.

The most preferred embodiment for electrical fusion, the fusion medium includes 0.28 M mannitol, 0.05 mM MgCl₂, 0.1 mg/ml polyvinyl alcohol, and a DC voltage of 2.0-2.5 Kv/cm. The ratio of the number of cytoplasts to
15 cells/karyoplasts is optimized to reduce the number of multiploid fusions while maximizing the number of diploid fusions. A preferred range of ratios of cytoplasts to karyoplasts or cells is about 0.01:1 to about 0.1:1, with the most preferred ratio being 0.1:1. More important is the concentration of cells (karyoplasts) per volume of fusion medium. A range from 20,000 – 100,000 cells
20 per 20 ul volume is preferred, with the most preferred cell concentration being 80,000 cells per 20 ul of fusion medium in a 2mm fusion chamber.

In order for subsequent development and proliferation to occur post-fusion, the newly fused hybrids must be activated to simulate cell cycle progression similar to that induced by sperm at fertilization. There are many
25 artificial activation methods available in the art which have been shown to induce both development of parthenotes and nuclear transfer couplets. For example activation may be achieved by electrical pulse (Kono *et al.*, *Theriogenology* 33:569-576 (1989)); Prochazka *et al.*, *J. Reprod. Fert.* 96:725-734 (1992)), ionomycin/DMAP (Susko-Parrish *et al.*, *Dev Biol* 166:729-739 (1994)), ethanol
30 (Nagai, *Gamete Res* 16:243-249 (1987)), cytochalasin/cycloheximide (Presicce

and Yang, *Mol. Reprod. Dev.* 37:61-68 (1994)), strontium (Oneil *et al.*, *Mol. Reprod. Dev.* 30:214-219 (1991)), adenophostin (Sato *et al.*, *Biol. Reprod.* 58:867-873 (1998)), disintegrin RGD peptide (Campbell *et al.*, *Proc Park City Utah Conference Abst* #7 (1998)), DDT/thimerosal (Machaty *et al.*, *Biol. Reprod.* 56:921-930 (1997)), and sperm factor (Swann, *Development* 110:1295-1302 (1990); Stice and Robl, *Mol. Reprod. Dev.* 25:272-280 (1990)). All of these methods have been shown to induce at least some specific biochemical effect that is similar to that observed during natural fertilization, followed by parthenogenic development to at least the blastocyst stage *in vitro*. In a preferred embodiment, 10 the activation stimulus is customized for the cytoplasm species being used by experimental optimization.

The activation stimulus can be delivered to the cytoplasts before, during or after fusion is induced. In a preferred embodiment, the activation stimulus is delivered such that the cell stage of the cytoplasm is matched with that of the donor 15 cell/karyoplast. By matching the cell cycles, aneuploidy in the resultant hybrid cells is minimized or eliminated. In a more preferred embodiment, the cell/karyoplast is synchronized in G1/G0 and the cytoplasm is maintained at metaphase arrest (the natural arrest point for mature ovulated oocytes awaiting fertilization). In this instance enhanced nuclear remodeling occurs because the 20 diploid donor chromosomes are induced to undergo nuclear envelope breakdown (NEVBD) and to condense in the recipient cytoplasm. NEVBD and chromatin condensation allow molecules from the oocyte cytoplasm fragment to remodel the nuclear donor chromatin, thus "erasing" the chromatin structure native to the differentiated cell (i.e. the "memory" of the differentiated state is erased). Upon 25 subsequent activation the donor DNA is induced to enter S-phase and replicate the "erased" genome in accordance with the timing of the first cell cycle of a newly fertilized oocyte.

In addition, pluripotent cells are produced by fusion of nuclear donor cells or karyoplasts with cytoplasm fragments derived from same species as the nuclear 30 donor. Preferred embodiments include the use of bovine, porcine, ovine, caprine,

rabbit, and primate differentiated cells as nuclear donors and oocyte cytoplasts from the same species, respectively.

5 **Inhibition of replication of cytoplasm donor mitochondria and supplementation of mitochondria from nuclear donor species**

A preferred embodiment involves making the mitochondria of the oocyte cytoplasm fragment replication incompetent by incubation with an appropriate inhibitor of mitochondrial DNA replication. This will ensure homoplasmy, that 10 is, a homogenous source of mitochondria in the cytoplasm, in the hybrids for the mitochondria from the donor cell. An inhibitor of mitochondrial DNA replication is the DNA intercalating dye ethidium bromide (King and Attardi, *Meth Enzymol* 264:304-334 (1996)). Cellular respiration is maintained when mitochondrial replication is inhibited by supplementation with glucose, pyruvate, and uridine 15 (King and Attardi, *Meth Enzymol* 264:304-334 (1996)).

To minimize detrimental effects that mitochondrial heteroplasmy, that is, mitochondria from divergent sources or species, may have on the proliferating hybrids, mitochondria derived from the nuclear donor species are used to supplement those in the hybrid cell population. Cells derived from the nuclear 20 donor animal are enucleated and the remaining enucleated cytoplasts are fused with the hybrid cells. To remove nuclei from adherent cells, the cells are centrifuged in the presence of a suitable microfilament inhibitor such as cytochalasin B. The nuclei pinch off and migrate to the bottom of the tube, leaving the cytoplasm plus mitochondria. The enucleated cytoplasts are then 25 fused with hybrid cells using common fusion protocols such as electrical fusion or polyethylene glycol. In a preferred embodiment, this is accomplished by fusion of hybrids with already enucleated, mitochondria-rich cells from the nuclear donor, such as blood-derived platelets (King and Attardi, *Meth. Enzymol.* 264:304-334 (1996)).

30 Kenyon and Morales, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 94:9131-9135 (1997)) showed that in trans-species hybrid cells, there seemed to be an incompatibility

between the nucleus of one species and the mitochondria of another. If it is difficult to proliferate hybrid cells made from certain species combinations, donor cells might be transfected with genes encoding important mitochondrial maintenance factors like the transcription factor, mtTFA (Larsson *et al.*, *Nat. Genet.* 18:231-236 (1998)). Reference to other factors can be found in Shade and Clayton, *Ann. Rev. Biochem.* 66:409-435 (1997)). Methods of cell transfection are well known in the art.

10 *Enhancement of Reprogramming Hybrid Cells*

Hyperacetylation of lysine residues located on the N-terminal tail of histone core proteins is associated with gene activation and transcription (Almouzni *et al.*, *Dev. Biol.* 165:654-669 (1994)). Histone acetylation is also associated with the heritability of chromatin structure through mitosis. To facilitate a chromatin structure in the hybrid that is more easily remodeled by the cytoplasm fragment, genes expressed in the nuclear donor can be down-regulated and switched off. To achieve this, nuclear donor cells can be transiently transfected with DNA constructs encoding appropriate modulators of gene expression and chromatin structure. In a preferred embodiment, the gene encoding histone deacetylase is transfected into the donor cells at a time prior to

15 hybrid production such that the chromatin of the nuclear donor cell becomes transcriptionally compromised. This effect causes the nuclear donor cell to lose its memory of being a differentiated cell, suitably priming its chromatin structure to take on the structure that is dictated by the oocyte derived cytoplasm fragment. Other such genes include, *inter alia*, Xenopus nucleoplasmin and its mammalian

20 equivalent (Chen *et al.*, 28:1033-1089 (1989)).

25

Activation of Gene Transcription in Hybrid Cells

Once reconstructed populations of hybrid cells (HDCs) are established, it may be desirable to assist the genome in activation of DNA transcription. This is accomplished by culturing the hybrid cells (HDCs) in medium supplemented 5 with compounds known to induce DNA transcription, such as histone deacetylases inhibitors. In a preferred embodiment, hybrid cells are cultured in the presence of histone deacetylase inhibitors. Examples of histone deacetylase inhibitors are butyrate and trichostatin A. More preferred is a compound that does not have inhibitory effects on cellular function other than reversible 10 inhibition of histone deacetylase, for example trichostatin A (Almouzni et al., *supra* (1994)).

Inhibition of Differentiation of Hybrid Cells

15 The activated hybrids are placed in a culture medium that is appropriate to support development and proliferation while maintaining the de-differentiated state. It is known in the art that when maintained on embryonic fibroblasts in culture, embryonic stem cells retain their totipotential capacity in generating cells of all lineages. Mouse, monkey, and human stem cells can be grown in culture 20 for extended period of time (reviewed by Thomson and Marshall, *Curr. Top. Dev. Biol.* 38:133-165 (1998)) and remain undifferentiated under specific culture conditions. It is preferred that the culture medium is supplemented with growth factors and cytokines that will maintain the undifferentiated state. Examples of such de-differentiating factors include LIF, Steel factor, and conditioned medium 25 from embryonic fibroblast cultures. Ultimately, the culture medium used depends on the species of cell/karyoplast donor since the growth and maintenance signals provided by the medium components provide gene transcription and regulation signals to that genome. For example, culture conditions known in the art to permit proliferation, while preventing differentiation, for human and monkey

embryonic stem cells (Thompson *et al.*, *Science* 282:1145-1147 (1998); Thompson *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 92:7844-7848 (1998)) are used when human cells/karyoplasts are used as donors.

In a preferred embodiment, the hybrids are cultured using mitotically
5 inactivated fibroblasts as feeder cells. The feeder layer is made by culturing primary embryonic fibroblasts to about 80% confluence then arresting further growth potential using a mitogenic inactivating agent such as mitomycin-C. The hybrids are then seeded onto this feeder layer in DMEM supplemented with an appropriate serum concentration and other growth factors that support
10 maintenance of an undifferentiated state. The undifferentiated state of embryonic stem cells can be monitored using a variety of cell surface markers. For example, cell surface expression of alkaline phosphatase is common to pluripotent ES cells from mice, non-human primates, and humans. In a preferred embodiment, the hybrids are cultured on a monkey fibroblast feeder layer in DMEM with 20% heat
15 inactivated fetal bovine serum, 0.1 mM β -mercaptoethanol, 1.0 mM glutamine, 1% non-essential amino acids, and 1000 units/ml recombinant human LIF.

In another embodiment, the hybrid cells (HDCs) are maintained in the undifferentiated state by prior transfection of donor cells with a selectable marker, such as toxin resistance gene, under control of a promoter with expression
20 restricted to undifferentiated cells. Therefore, when the toxin is added to the medium, only the undifferentiated cells will survive. A preferred scheme for such selection is to transfet an oct4-neo DNA construct (McWhir *et al.*, *Nature Genet* 14:223-226 (1996)), and to grow the hybrids in the presence of geneticin (G418), preventing survival of any differentiated cells. Furthermore, the transgene may
25 be flanked with lox-p sites to permit removal of the expression cassette in cells before transplantation.

As an additional means to maintain an undifferentiated state, the hybrid cells (HDCs) growing on fibroblast feeder layers, are supplemented with GCT44 factor (human yolk sac teratoma cell factor), a factor shown to be beneficial in the
30 maintenance of human EC cell lines (Roach *et al.*, *Eur. Urol.* 23:82-88 (1993)).

Differentiation of Hybrid Cells to Specific Lineages

Differentiation of hybrid cells (HDCs) to a specific lineage is accomplished by removing the hybrid cells from culture conditions intended to prevent differentiation and supplementing the culture conditions with agents known to induce differentiation of embryonic stem cells into that lineage (reviewed in Fuchs and Segre, *Cell* 100:143-155 (2000)). Such differentiated cell types include neural cell (oligodendrocytes, astrocytes, doparninergic neurons), hematopoietic cells (macrophages, erythrocytes), and muscle cells (skeletal, heart vascular smooth muscle).

Hybrids are induced to form neural-like cells by plating them in a defined medium containing a neural pathway differentiation signal such as retinoic acid. Glial cell precursors are induced to differentiate into two distinct populations, oligodendrocytes or astrocytes, by sequential culture in fibroblast growth factor 2 (FGF2), followed by a mixture FGF2 plus epidermal growth factor (EGF), and finally a mixture of FGF2 and platelet-derived growth factor (PDGF). Development of erythrocytes from dedifferentiated hybrid cells is accomplished using c-kit plus erythropoietin. Macrophages are made using a cocktail of macrophage colony stimulating factor (M-CSF), interleukin 1, and interleukin. Differentiation of cultured hybrids to obtain adipocytes is done by culturing in appropriate levels of retinoic acid, insulin, and tri-iodothyronine. Heart vascular smooth muscle cells are produced by culturing hybrids in retinoic acid plus dibutyryl cyclic AMP. Endodermal cells obtained by differentiating hybrids are induced to become pancreatic cell precursors by exposing them to medium conditioned with cells obtained from the pancreatic bud. Differentiation into neural precursors or skeletal myoblasts can be induced by culturing hybrid cells in medium supplemented with retinoic acid or dimethyl sulfoxide, respectively (Dinsmore *et al.*, *Cell Transplantation* 2:131-143 (1996)).

Differentiation of cells into specific cell types made according to previous aspects of the invention may also be assisted by the transfection of genes encoding transcription factors or other specific gene activators. Such cloned factors have been effective in converting fibroblasts into myoblasts (Myo D: 5 Davis *et al.*, *Cell* 51:987-1000 (1987)) or in converting fibroblasts (PPAR gamma: Tontonoz *et al.*, *Cell* 79:147-1156 (1994)) and myoblasts [PPAR gamma and C/EBP alpha: Hu *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 92:9856 -9860 (1995)) into adipocytes.

10 ***Production of Genetically Modified Pluripotent Cells***

This aspect of the invention relates primarily, but is not limited to human medicinal applications. In order to achieve a modified biological effect of the hybrid cells (HDC's), genes are transfected either before (in primary cell cultures), after (in pluripotent cell cultures) hybrid cells are produced, or after hybrid cells 15 are induced to differentiate. Preferred genes are those designed to correct genetic defects or supply cells with the capacity to produce a desired protein, enzyme, enzyme product, cellular component, or deliver a therapeutic benefit to a specific tissue niche, etc. The gene expression is activated constitutively, upon induction by a trans-activator, or upon transplant into the appropriate milieu. The genetic modifications are either site-specific (targeted) or not (heterologous). In a preferred embodiment, the primary cells are transfected. Thus, the desired 20 genetic modifications are made in early passage cells which reduces the amount *in vitro* culture for the hybrid cells (HDC's). It is preferred that the desired structural gene be placed under operative control of a promoter suitable for the 25 ultimate cell type desired. There are many tissue-specific and constitutive promoters and methods of transfecting cells in targeted and non-targeted loci available in the art. Corrections of genetic mutations such as those found in sickle cell anemia (β -globin) and diabetes (insulin) are examples of targeted strategies to fix defects in the donor cells. Furthermore, genes may be added to

cells (which are subsequently made pluripotent) to compensate for a deficiency of a certain cell type that leads to disease.

A further embodiment involves the use of cells genetically modified to inhibit tissue rejection associated with xenotransplantation of cells. For example,

5 one strategy to combat Parkinson's disease and diabetes is to transplant pig neural and pancreatic islet cells, respectively, from pigs into humans. These approaches are fraught with rejection of the pig tissue by the host immune system. In a preferred embodiment, primary pig cells (such as fibroblasts) are modified to remove the primary xenoantigen (α -1-3 galactosyltransferase. These cells are

10 then made pluripotent, induced to differentiate into neural or pancreatic cells by the methods described in the invention, and used in cell therapy applications for Parkinson's Disease or diabetes, respectively.

In a preferred embodiment the cells from the same species into which the transplant will occur, are genetically modified, fused with cytoplasm fragments and

15 subsequently differentiated into the desired cell type, as described by the current invention. For example, somatic cells from a patient with sickle cell anemia are transfected with a DNA construct designed to correct the mutation in the β -globin gene. The corrected cells are made pluripotent, and then differentiated into hematopoietic stem cells by methods of the current invention. Finally the

20 hematopoietic stem cells are transplanted back into the patient to repopulate the bone marrow with corrected cells of autologous origin.

Examples

Example 1: Production of Porcine-porcine Hybrids with Porcine Cytoplasts

25 Porcine oocytes arrested at metaphase II of the meiotic cycle were aspirated from pre-ovulatory antral follicles obtained from the ovaries of donor gilts superovulated using standard procedures. The zona pellucidae were removed by incubating oocytes in 0.5 mg/ml Pronase (Sigma Chemical Co., St.

Louis, MO) in Phosphate Buffered Saline (Gibco BRL, Gaithersburg, MD) for 10 minutes. Oocytes (200 count) were then incubated in 7.5 μ g/ml cytochalasin B (Sigma) in NCSU23 medium (Petters and Wells, *J. Reprod. Fert. Suppl.* 48:61-73 (1993)) modified to be used as a benchtop holding medium for 5 minutes. The NCSU23 medium was modified by deleting all NaHCO₃, adjusting KH₂PO₄ to 0.44 MM, adding 1.34 mM Na₂HPO₄, and compensating for the changes in K and Na by adjusting the NaCl and KCl concentrations accordingly. Optimal cytoplasm size (30-40 μ m) was obtained by vortexing (Vortex Genie 2, Scientific Industries, Bohemia, NY) the oocytes in a 0.5 ml Eppendorf microcentrifuge tube for 7 seconds using a speed setting of 10. Contact inhibited (100% confluent) porcine fetal fibroblasts were harvested using 0.25% trypsin-EDTA (Gibco BRL), washed in NCSU23-phosphate, then resuspended in fusion medium (0.3 M mannitol, 0.1 mM CaCl₂, 0.05 mM MgCl₂, 0.1 mg/ml PVA) at a concentration of 1.0 \times 10⁶ cells per ml. Roughly 2.0 \times 10⁴ cells, in 20 μ l of fusion medium, were placed into a 3.2 mm fusion chamber (Model BT 453, BTX Gentronics, San Diego, CA), and the cytoplasts (approx. 6000) were pipetted into the fusion chamber with the cells. Contact between the cells and oocytes was made by sequentially pipetting the cells and cytoplasts while visualizing them using stereomicroscope. Fusion was induced using two 1.25 KVolts/cm DC pulses for 60 μ sec each. The couplets were induced to activate 20 minutes later using another two DC pulses at 1.0 kilovolt/cm for 60 μ sec each in activation medium SOR2 (0.3 M sorbitol, 0.1 mM Ca-acetate, 0.05 mM Mg-sulfate). The hybrids were washed free from surrounding cells and placed in NCSU23 culture medium at 38.5 C in a humidified atmosphere of 5% CO₂ in air and examined 18 hours later. Hybrids were placed into NCSU23-phosphate medium containing 7.5 μ g/ml Hoechst 33342 (Sigma Chemical Co) and evaluated for fusion efficiency and gross chromatin structure using an Olympus IX70 inverted microscope equipped with narrow band UV epifluorescence. A total of 32 cytoplasts were subjected to fusion, 8 of which fused. In 7 of the fused cytoplasts, there was a single intact set of condensed chromosomes suggesting that the cytoplasts had

induced nuclear envelope breakdown and chromatin condensation from fusion of a single cell. The other cytoplasm contained DNA from multiple cells.

Example 2: Production of Porcine-rabbit Hybrids with Rabbit Cytoplasts.

5 Rabbit oocytes arrested at metaphase II of the meiotic cycle were flushed from the oviducts of superovulated 6 month old New Zealand White rabbits, using standard protocols. Both pronase and acid Tyrode's solution failed to remove the zona pellucida. Therefore, the cytoplasts were made manually by micromanipulation using 7.5 µg/ml cytochalasin B (Sigma Chemical Co.) in
10 NCSU23-phosphate medium. The hybrids were produced as described above for the porcine-porcine hybrids. A total of 46 cytoplasts were prepared from 3 oocytes and 21 of them fused with a single fetal fibroblast. In 20 of the fused cytoplasts, there was a single swollen nuclear structure suggesting that the cytoplasts had activated. Proliferative potential could not be measured in these
15 initial trials since the culture medium did not contain any growth factors or serum. The purpose of this experiment was only to evaluate cytoplasm preparation and fusion.

Example 3: Production of Hybrids from Porcine Fetal Fibroblasts with Bovine Cytoplasts: Formation of Stem Cell-like Colonies

20 Culture tubes containing bovine cumulus oocyte complexes (COCs) in 5% CO₂-equilibrated maturation medium were shipped overnight in a portable isothermal incubator at 39°C from the oocyte production laboratory (Genetic Technologies International, Brian, TX) to our laboratory. At 18 hours of *in vitro* maturation, COCs were removed from maturation medium and incubated for 10 minutes in modified phosphate buffered synthetic oviductal fluid (SOF-P) supplemented with 0.3 mg/ml hyaluronidase (Sigma). SOF-P medium was formulated as a benchtop medium for bovine oocytes and embryos to be used
25

outside the incubator. The formulation for SOF (*Tervit et al., J. Reprod. Fert.* 30: 493-497 (1972)) was modified by deleting all sodium bicarbonate, changing the BSA concentration to 1 mg/ml, adjusting KH₂PO₄ to 0.44 mM, adding 1.34 mM Na₂HPO₄, and compensating for the changes in K and Na by adjusting 5 the NaCl and KCl concentrations accordingly. COCs were stripped of the cumulus cells by vortexing (Vortex Genie 2, Scientific Industries, Bohemia, NY) at maximum speed for 3 minutes in 1 ml of medium in a 15 ml conical centrifuge tube (Falcon, Cat # 05-52790). Oocytes were scored for successful completion 10 of nuclear maturation by the presence of a single polar body (PB+) in the perivitellin space using a standard stereomicroscope (Olympus SXH). PB+ oocytes were allowed to recover from hyaluronidase treatment for 1 hour in bicarbonate buffered synthetic oviductal fluid (SOF) supplemented with 1/2X non-essential and essential amino acids (Gibco BRL, Gaithersburg, MD) at 38.5°C and 5% CO₂ in air. The zona pellucidae were removed by incubation in SOF-P 15 with 2 mg/ml pronase (Calbiochem, La Jolla, CA) with continuous pipetting. Zona free oocytes were placed in SOF-P microdrops to recover for 20 minutes, then incubated in SOF-P with 5.0 µg/ml cytochalasin B (CB, Calbiochem) and 7.5 µg/ml Hoechst 33342 (Calbiochem) for 10 minutes. Groups of 20-40 oocytes were fragmented by vortexing in 200 µl of SOF-P with CB in a 1.5 ml 20 microcentrifuge tube for 5-10 seconds. Cytoplasm fragments (Figure 1) were collected and placed in a microdrop of SOF-P and cytoplasts containing the endogenous chromosomes were identified using UV illumination (Olympus IX 70 inverted microscope) and removed using a 22 µm micropipette (Humagen, Charlottesville, VA) connected to a syringe microinjector (Cell Tram-oil, 25 Eppendorf Scientific, Westbury, NY), and controlled using a micromanipulator (Model # MMN-202D, Narishige, East Meadow, NY). Enucleated cytoplasts were transferred to fresh medium and held until fusion with nucleated cells.

Cells used as nuclear donors were porcine fetal fibroblasts grown to confluence in a 35 mm culture dish containing 2 ml of culture medium. Culture 30 medium consisted of DMEM (Gibco BRL), 10% FCS (Hyclone, Loagn, UT), and

2.0 mg/ml bFGF (Collaborative Biomedical Products, Bedford, MA). Cells were harvested using trypsin/EGTA and suspended in SOF-P. Cells were pelleted by centrifugation at 1600 RPM for 4 minutes, all medium removed and the pellet resuspended in 1.0 ml of fusion medium (0.3 M manitol, 0.05 mM MgCl₂, and 5 0.1 mg/ml polyvinyl alcohol). The cell concentration was approximately 1.0 x10⁶ per ml. Cytoplasts were added to the fusion medium containing the cells and allowed to settle to the bottom of the tube. A mixture of cells and cytoplasts were aspirated from the bottom of the tube and placed into a 3.2 cm fusion chamber (Model BT 453, BTX, Gentronics, San Diego, CA) filled with fusion medium.

10 Fusion was induced using a single 1.25 KVolts/cm DC pulse for 60 μ sec (Model ECM 2001, BTX). The couplets were washed out of fusion medium into SOF-P with 20% heat inactivated FCS. Couplets were induced to activate by incubation in SOF-P containing 5.9 μ M ionomycin (Sigma) for 4 minutes, followed by incubation in SOF containing 2.0 mM dimethylanimopurine (DMAP, Sigma) for 15 4 hours. Couplets were then cultured in 30 μ l drops of SOF under oil at 38.5°C in humidified atmosphere of 5% CO₂ in air. Unfused porcine fetal fibroblasts were added to the culture to be used as feeder cells.

A group of non-activated hybrid cells was cultured overnight and stained using Hoechst 3342 to evaluate chromatin structure. In addition, a group of 20 activated hybrid cells were cultured in a separate drop without feeder cells in SOF containing 10X the manufacturer's recommendation of bromodeoxy uridine (BrdU) to assess proliferative potential by assaying them for DNA replication. After 1 week of culture the remaining activated hybrid cells were assessed using DIC, phase contrast, and epi-fluorescence (after staining with 1 μ g/ml Hoechst 25 33342) microscopy.

Of the cytoplasts that survived fusion and were not activated with ionomycin and DMAP, all of them contained condensed DNA and an intact nuclear membrane was absent (Figure 2). This observation suggested that the oocyte fragments were indeed capable of inducing nuclear envelope breakdown 30 and premature chromatin condensation (PCC) on the nuclear donor cell. This is

a process known to occur when an intact metaphase II stage oocyte is fused S-phase blastomeres (Campbell *et al.*, *Biol. Reprod.* 50:1385-1393, (1994)) and quiescent cells (Wakayama *et al.*, *Nature* 394:369-374 (1998)).

The group of cytoplasts that were cultured for 20 hours after activation in
5 the presence of BrdU with activation were analyzed for evidence of DNA synthesis using a BrdU incorporation immunofluorescent assay (Roche Molecular Biochemicals, Indianapolis, IN). An aggregate of hybrid cells of unknown cell number was fixed using 50 mM glycine (Sigma) in 70% ethanol (Sigma), pH 2.0 at -20 C. BrdU incorporation assay was performed using a FITC-labeled anti-
10 BrdU monoclonal antibody according to the manufacturer's instructions. Samples were counterstained for bulk DNA content with DAPI (Sigma) and the presence of both FICT. and DAPI was assessed by epifluorescence using an Olympus AX-70 research microscope equipped with appropriate excitation filters (Chroma Technology Corp., Brattleboro, VT). Digital grayscale images were recorded for
15 each fluorochrome using an LAR Astrocam (Model TE3/A/S) cooled CCD camera. A composite image was constructed by psuedocoloring the grayscale image from both fluorochromes (blue for DAPI and green for FICT.) using LAR Ultra view Spatial Imaging Module (v 2.2.1) image analysis software. Most of the cells in the aggregate stained green indicating that DNA synthesis had
20 occurred in the activated reconstructed hybrid cells (Figure 3). After culture for 7 days without feeder cells, the hybrids aggregated with one another and appeared to proliferate as an embroid body or mass, possibly indicating the ability to differentiate (Figure 4).

The unfused fibroblasts attached to the bottom of the culture dish in small
25 aggregates of cells. Associated with these small fibroblast colonies, cell colonies of entirely different morphology were also present at much higher cell number. These colonies were characterized by a large nucleus to cytoplasm ratio, formation of tight aggregates of cells rising above the culture dish surface, and small round nuclear morphology. The morphological characteristics of these cells
30 resembled that of embryonic stem cells (Figure 5). Since all of the bovine

cytoplasts containing any bovine DNA were removed prior to fusion, the cells of ES-like morphology had to have arisen from reconstructed hybrid cells between the porcine fetal fibroblasts and enucleated bovine cytoplasts.

5 *Example 4: Preparation and Characterization of Bovine Oocyte Cytoplasts*

All culture media and cytoplasm preparation methods were the same as those described in Example 3. Cytoplasm fragments were prepared from bovine oocytes (Figure 6A). The results indicated that incubation of zona-free oocytes in cytochalasin B allowed for their fractionation by vortexing without significant lysis (2-4%), and enabled the correlation of vortexing time with the desired cytoplasm fragment size. Visualization of fractionated oocytes pre-labeled with a vital mitochondrial dye (MitoTracker, Molecular Probes, Eugene, OR) and DNA stain (Syto 16, Molecular Probes) indicated that the cytoplasmic fragments retained comparable amounts of live mitochondria and RNAs (Figure 6, E and F).
10 This result confirmed the assumption that oocyte cellular components were evenly distributed among cytoplasts after fractionation, which suggested that a high proportion of the cytoplasts were of similar quality with respect to these markers. In addition, the cytoplasm fragments retained their size, shape, and membrane integrity for at least 48 hours (data not shown), and survived
15 cryopreservation after thawing.
20

Example 5: Generation of Cardiomyocytes (beating muscle cells) from Hybrid-Derived Cell Preparations Demonstrates Reprogramming

Bovine cytoplasts were prepared using the same method as in Example
25 4 above. Cytoplasm fragments obtained from 500 oocytes (approx. 15,000 cytoplasts) were added to 1 ml fusion medium (0.28 M mannitol in water) containing 1×10^6 cells and allowed to settle to the bottom of the tube. A mixture of cells and cytoplasts were aspirated from the bottom of the tube and placed into a 3.2 cm fusion chamber (Model BT 453, BTX, Gentronics, San Diego, CA)

filled with fusion medium (50 ul). Fusion was induced using a single 1.25 KVolts/cm DC pulse for 60 μ sec (Model ECM 2001, BTX). The couplets were washed out of fusion medium into SOF-P with 20% heat inactivated FCS.

Couplets were induced to activate by incubation in SOF-P containing 5.9 μ M
5 ionomycin (Sigma) for 4 minutes, followed by incubation in SOF containing 2.0 mM dimethylinosine (DMAP, Sigma) for 4 hours. The couplets were subsequently washed out of DMAP and plated onto feeder layers of γ -irradiated primary mouse embryonic fibroblasts in stem cell medium (high glucose DMEM w/o pyruvate, 20% FBS, 2 nM glutamine, 1% non-essential amino acids, 0.1 mM
10 beta-mercaptoethanol, and 1000 units/ml recombinant human LIF).

The cells used as nuclear donors (BSFF-GFP cells) were bovine fetal fibroblasts from the Brown Swiss breed and were transgenic for Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP), where the GFP gene was under control of the constitutive elongation factor promoter (EF-1 α), to allow the visualization of HDC-derived
15 colonies in the presence of the feeder layer. After 7 days culture of the HDCs on feeder layers, numerous GFP (+) colonies were observed with stem cell-like morphology. One GFP (+) colony had a large lobe of cells (roughly 30 % of the colony) that were beating rhythmically. This colony continued to beat for 2 weeks. These myocardial-like cells are similar to morphologies obtained from
20 spontaneous differentiation of mouse ES cells, and are an early indication that these bovine hybrid-derived cell colonies are pluripotent. This example demonstrates the usefulness of the methods of the invention in reprogramming cells.

25 ***Example 6: Use of Fluorescent Activated Cell Sorting (FACS) to Enrich for Fusion Products (Hybrid Derived Cells)***

Two separate experiments were performed which utilize cell sorting and enrichment methods for the generation and selection of hybrid-derived cells, and are outlined below. In both experiments, fluorescent Cell-Tracker dyes (Molecular
30 Probes) were used to stain cytoplasm, in order to follow the cytoplasm during the

generation of cytoplasm/cell fusion products. Experiment 1 used bovine fetal fibroblasts as the nuclear donor and a vital DNA-staining dye (Hoechst 33342), while Experiment 2 utilized cells transgenic for Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP) as a means of marking the nucleus of the donor cell.

5

Steps 1, 3, 5, and 6 are common to both Exps. 1 & 2.

Step 1: Oocyte/Cytoplasm Preparation

Bovine oocytes, aspirated from slaughterhouse ovaries, were received by
10 overnight shipment from a commercial oocyte provider (Ovagenix; Genetic
Technologies International, San Angelo, TX). They were shipped in maturation
medium and were expected to be at meiotic metaphase II after 24 hours in
maturation medium. Oocytes were removed from the maturation medium (M199
with Earles Salts with L-glutamine and sodium bicarbonate (Life Technologies);
15 with 10% FBS (Hyclone), 2 u/ml bFSH (Sioux Biochemical), 1.5 u/ml
bLH(Sioux Biochemical)), washed in FHM with phenol red (Specialty Media)
and incubated for 5 minutes in hyaluronidase (0.3 mg/ml). Cumulus cells were
removed by rapid vortexing for 3 minutes. The oocytes were washed and rested
for 5 minutes in FHM.

20 Oocytes were incubated for 30 mins in 2.5 uM Cell Tracker Dye
(Molecular Probes C-2925 (green) for Experiment 1, below or orange for
experiment 2, below) to stain the cytoplasm. They were washed and allowed to
recover for 15-30 minutes in FHM. Zonae pellucidae were removed/dissolved by
a brief (2-6 minute) incubation in pronase (5 mg/ml; Sigma) and polyvinyl
25 pyrrolidone (0.5 mg/ml; Sigma) in PBS. Zona-free oocytes were washed and
allowed to recover for 30-60 minutes in FHM.

To fragment the oocytes into cytoplasts (roughly 40 per oocyte), zona-free
oocytes were incubated in 20 ul fusion medium (0.3 M mannitol in water) with

cytochalasin B (7.5 ug/ml; Sigma) for 10 minutes and vortexed for 3-30 seconds.

The cytoplasts were ready for fusion to nuclear donor cells.

Step 2: Preparation of Nuclear Donor Cells

5 Experiment 1:

Bovine Brown Swiss Fetal Fibroblast (BSFF) cells were seeded at least 3 days prior to their use for this experiment. They were cultured in DMEM with non-essential amino acids (0.1mM; Specialty Media) and 20% FBS (Specialty Media) until 24-36 hours before use and then cultured in DMEM with non-
10 essential amino acids without serum (serum starved).

BSFF cells were removed from the culture dish by removing media, washing with PBS, then incubating in trypsin-EDTA (Life Technologies) for 2-5 minutes. Cells were centrifuged and the pellet resuspended in fusion medium containing Hoechst 33342 (7.5 ug/ml; Sigma) for 5 minutes. BSFF cells were
15 counted and aliquots of 40,000-100,000 cells were placed in 0.5 ml microfuge tubes, centrifuged and resuspended in 20 ul of fusion medium.

Experiment 2:

BSFF cells were transfected by a standard lipofection method
20 (Lipofectamine, Gibco) with a Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP) gene, under control of the constitutive elongation factor (EF)- α promoter. The resulting transgenic cells, called BSFF-GFP cells, were seeded at least 3 days prior to their use for this experiment. They were cultured in DMEM (Specialty Media) with non-essential amino acids (0.1mM; Specialty Media) and 20% FBS (Specialty
25 Media) until 24-36 hours before use and then cultured in DMEM with non-essential amino acids (0.1mM) without serum (serum starved).

BSFF-GFP cells were removed from the culture dish by removing media, washing with PBS, then incubating in trypsin-EDTA (Life Technologies) for 2-5

minutes. Cells were centrifuged and the pellet resuspended in fusion medium (0.3 M mannitol in water). BSFF-GFP cells were counted and aliquots of 40,000-100,000 cells were placed in 0.5 ml microfuge tubes, centrifuged and resuspended in 20 ul of fusion medium.

5

Step 3: Fusion

Cytoplasts and cells were mixed in a 0.5 ml microfuge tube and aliquots of 20 ul were placed in the fusion chamber (BTX P/N 450; 2mm electrode gap; electrodes on glass slide OR 2 mm gap cuvette electrode). Two pulses were 10 applied, pulse length was 40-80 us, and pulse strength was 40-100 V (1-2.5 kV/cm). The contents of the fusion chamber were removed immediately after fusion and placed in FHM. Optimum parameters were: 80,000 BSFF cells and up to 10,000 cytoplasts/20 ul fusion volume, 60 us pulse length, 2 pulses, 2.4 kV/cm pulse strength. Fusion rates of up to 97% were achieved using these optimal 15 parameters.

Step 4: Fluorescent-activated cell sorting (FACS)

Fusion products were sorted on a Becton Dickenson cell sorter.

a. Using BSFF cells from Experiment 1 above: Fusion products 20 (hybrid cells) were sorted from unfused BSFF cells by selecting firstly for green Cell-Tracker dye. All cytoplasts (fused and unfused) were selected. The products of this sort were sorted a second time, with selection for Hoechst 33342 blue-stained DNA. Thus the population of cells was enriched for cytoplasts (green) fused with BSFF cells (blue). Results from the second sort show that there were 25 two fluorescent peaks visible (Figure 7). The first peak (D) corresponds to mononucleate hybrid cells and the second peak (B) corresponds to multinucleate hybrid cells. Therefore, in addition to enriching for fusion products, the FACS

sort provides a method for sorting aneuploid hybrid cells away from those with a normal karyotype.

b. Using BSFF-GFP cells from Experiment 2 above: Fusion products (hybrid cells) were sorted firstly from unfused BSFF cells by selecting for orange Cell-Tracker dye. All cytoplasts (fused and unfused) were selected. The FACS was also able to sort green GFP positive BSFF-GFP cells from the population, providing a method for enriching for BSFF-GFP cells. Using this double-dye sorting method, it was possible to significantly enrich for fusion products (orange cytoplasm with a green nucleus), without having to do a secondary stain with a DNA-specific dye such as Hoechst.

5. Activation

Hybrid cells were activated 30-60 minutes after the FACS sort using either: 4 minutes in Ionomycin (25 uM in FHM; Sigma) then 4 hours in DMAP (2 mM in culture medium; Calbiochem); OR: 6 minutes in 7% ethanol in FHM, then 1 hour in cycloheximide (7.5 ug/ml; Calbiochem) and cytochalasin D (10 ug/ml; Sigma) in culture medium, then 3 hours in cycloheximide (7.5 ug/ml) in culture medium.

20 6. Culture

Hybrid cells were cultured either on mitomycin C inactivated mouse embryonic fibroblast feeder layers (Specialty Media) in stem cell medium (DMEM with 20% FBS, 1mM non-essential amino acids, 1 mM L-glutamine (Sigma), 0.1 mM beta-mercaptoethanol (Sigma); or on untreated tissue culture plates in G1/G2 (IVF Scientific) sequential medium.

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method of generating a pluripotent mammalian cell, the process comprising the preparation of cytoplasm fragments from a mammalian oocyte or fertilized zygote (the cytoplasm donor), fusion of a cytoplasm fragment with a cell or karyoplast (the nuclear donor) which is taken from any mammalian species.
2. A cell population derived from the method of claim 1.
3. A method according to claim 1, wherein the cytoplasm fragments are prepared by a process that includes removing the zona pellucida, treatment of the cytoplasm donor with a microfilament inhibitor, and fragmentation into cytoplasts by vortexing, or micropipetting, or manual slicing with a suitable micromanipulation tool.
4. A method according to claim 1 further comprising enucleating the cytoplasm donor prior to fragmentation.
5. A method according to claim 1, wherein the cytoplasm donor is an activated, low MPF (interphase) oocyte, or an aged, unactivated, low MPF, oocyte, or most preferred, an unactivated, high MPF, metaphase II oocyte.
6. A method according to claim 1, wherein the cytoplasm donor is from a different species from that of the nuclear donor.
7. A method according to claim 1, wherein the cytoplasm donor is from the same species as that of the nuclear donor.
8. A method as claimed in any of claims 1-7, wherein the cytoplasm donor is derived from any non-human mammalian species, but preferably from mouse, rat, rabbit, sheep, goat, pig, or most preferably, cow.

9. A method as claimed in any of claims 1-8, wherein fusion between cytoplasm and karyoplast includes one of the following methods: electrical fusion, chemical fusion (i.e., polyethylene glycol or high pH-low osmolarity, virus-mediated fusion (i.e., Sendai virus), liposomes, or fusion mediated by cell surface proteins (i.e., hernaglutinins).

10. A method according to claim 1 further comprising an activation step.

10

11. A method according to claim 10 wherein the method of activation is selected from one of the following methods: electrical pulse, ionomycin/DMAP, cytochalasin/cyclohexamide, strontium, adenophostin, disintegnin RGD peptide, DDT/thimerosal, or sperm factor.

15

12. A method according to any of claims 1-11, wherein the cytoplasts are prepared from in vivo or in vitro produced oocytes.

13. A method according to claim 12, wherein the oocytes have been subjected to an in vitro maturation step.

20

14. A method according to any of claims 1-13, wherein the donor nucleus is from an embryonic, fetal, or adult cell/karyoplast.

25

15. A method according to claim 14, wherein the donor nucleus is from a diploid cell.

16. A method according to claim 15, wherein the diploid nucleus is provided preferably by a cell/karyoplast synchronized in G0/G1, or by a cell arrested at the G1/S border.

30

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17. A method according to claim 14, wherein the donor nucleus is from a differentiated or undifferentiated stem cell, or somatic cell.

18. A method according to claims 14-17, wherein the donor nucleus
5 is from a human cell.

19. A method as claimed in any of claims 1-17, wherein the donor nucleus is from a cow or bull, pig, sheep, goat, camel, waterbuffalo, primate, rodent, or lagomorph.

10

20. A method as claimed in any of claims 1-19, in which the donor nucleus has been genetically modified.

21. A method according to claim 20, wherein the cell used to provide
15 the donor nucleus has been genetically modified, such that the resultant hybrid cell (produced according to claim 1) provides a means to cure or treat animal or human disease.

22. Genetically modified mammalian cells, as referred to in claim 20
20 (most preferably human cells), which have been stably transfected with genes (i.e., coding for therapeutic proteins such as insulin, clotting factors, erythropoietin, tumor suppressor genes, growth factors, cytokines, therapeutic peptides, or antibodies). Such donor cells would be used to produce hybrid derived populations of cells, which could be differentiated into the cell type most
25 apt for delivery of the therapeutic agent.

23. A method as claimed in any of claims 1-22, in which the mitochondria of the donor cytoplasm is made replication incompetent (i.e., incubation with EtBr or any other inhibitor of mitochondrial DNA replication).

30

24. A method according to claim 23, wherein the cytoplasts chosen, contain congenital mitochondrial lesions.

25. A method as claimed in any of claims 1-24, wherein mitochondria 5 derived from the same species (or most preferred, from the same animal or individual) as the nuclear donor, are used to supplement the mitochondria present in the hybrid cell.

26. A method according to claim 25, wherein the mitochondria are 10 supplemented via fusion of an enucleated cytoplasm (which is derived from the same species/animal/individual as the nuclear donor) with a previously formed (according to claim 1) hybrid cell or couplet.

27. A method according to claim 26, wherein the anucleate cytoplasm, 15 used for fusion to the hybrid cell, is derived from mitochondria-rich, blood-derived platelets (again the platelets would be derived from the same species/animal/individual, as the nuclear donor).

28. A method according to claim 20, wherein genes encoding 20 mitochondrial maintenance factors (i.e., mtTFA), are stably transfected into the cells used as nuclear donors, as a means to facilitate survival of trans-species mitochondria.

29. A method according to claim 20, wherein genes encoding 25 modulators of histone acetylation and chromatin structure, are transiently expressed in nuclear donor cells, as a means to compromise the transcriptional apparatus of the donor cells, thus creating an environment conducive to chromatin reprogramming in resulting hybrids.

30. A method according to claim 27, wherein the gene used for general downregulation of gene transcription in the donor cell/karyoplast is histone deacetylase, which in the preferred method, is transfected into the donor cell prior to hybrid production, in order to facilitate reprogramming upon contact
5 with the components contained in the cytoplasm fragment.

31. A method as claimed in any of claims 1-30, wherein already-established populations of hybrid-derived cells (HDCs), are cultured in the presence of compounds or factors known to induce gene transcription, as a means
10 to assist the HDC genome in activation of gene transcription.

32. A method according to claim 31, wherein the inducers of gene transcription are reversible inhibitors of histone deacetylase, including butyrate, or in a more preferred method, trichostatin A.
15

33. A method according to claim 31, wherein HDCs are cultured in a medium that is appropriate to support development and proliferation, while maintaining a dedifferentiated state.

20 34. A method according to claim 33, wherein HDCs are cultured in a medium containing growth factors and cytokines, including LIF, stem cell factor, and/or GCT44 (human yolk sac teratoma cell factor).

25 35. A method according to claim 33, wherein HDCs are cultured in the presence of mitotically-inactivated primary cell feeder cell layers, as a means to facilitate growth, while maintaining an undifferentiated state.

36. A method as claimed in any of claims 1-35, wherein already established populations

of HDCs are removed from culture conditions intended to prevent differentiation (according to claims 33-35), and are induced to differentiate, by culture in the presence of chemicals and factors known to induce differentiation of cells to become specific lineages.

5

37. A method according to claim 36, wherein HDCs are cultured in the presence of factors known to induce neural pathway differentiation, including retinoic acid, fibroblast growth factor 2 (FGF2), epidermal growth factor (EGF), and plateletderived growth factor (PDGF).

10

38. A method according to claim 36, wherein HDCs are cultured in the presence of c-kit and erythropoietin, to induce the development of erythrocyte precursors.

15

39. A method according to claim 36, wherein HDCs are cultured in the presence of macrophage colony stimulating factor (M-CSF) and interleukin 1, and interleukin 3, to induce development of macrophage precursors.

20

40. A method according to claim 36, wherein HDCs are cultured in the presence of
retinoic acid, insulin, and tri-odothyronine, to induce development of adipocytes.

25

41. A method according to claim 36, wherein HDCs are cultured in the presence of
retinoic acid plus dibutyryl cyclic AMP, to induce development of heart vascular smooth muscle cells.

30

42. A method according to claim 36, wherein HDCs are co-cultured in the presence of cells from the pancreatic bud, in order to induce differentiation to become pancreatic cell precursors, for insulin production.

43. A method according to claim 35, wherein HDCs, or cells subsequently derived from HDCs (according to claims 36-42), are transfected with genes encoding specific gene activators or transcription factors (i.e., Myo D, 5 or PPAR gamma, or C/EBP alpha), as an alternative means of inducing lineage-specific differentiation.

44. A method according to claims 1-43, wherein the HDCs are used as nuclear donors to clone an organism by nuclear transfer.

10

45. A method according to claims 1-43, wherein the HDCs are used as donor cells to produce chimeric organisms.

15

46. A method of preparing and enriching a population of pluripotent cells comprising:

staining with a stain having a first color the cytoplasm of a population of oocytes or fertilized zygotes prior to fragmentation of said oocytes or fertilized zygotes into a population of cytoplasts to;

20

fragmenting said population of oocytes or fertilized zygotes to produce a population of stained cytoplasts;

transflecting a population of donor cells with a gene that encodes a fluorescent protein fluorescing a second color to produce a population of donor cells transfected with a gene encoding a fluorescent protein;

25

fusing said population of stained cytoplasts and said population of nuclear donor cells transfected with a gene encoding a fluorescent protein in order to produce a population of cells comprising fusion products, unfused cytoplasts, unfused nuclear donors, wherein said fusion products comprise hybrid cells with a normal karyotype and aneuploidy cells;

30

sorting the population of cells by selecting for fusion products and unfused cytoplasts marked by the first color; and

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further sorting the fusion products by selecting for cells with a normal karyotype marked by the second color.

47. A method of preparing and enriching a population of pluripotent
5 cells comprising:

staining with a stain having a first color the cytoplasm of a population of oocytes or fertilized zygotes prior to fragmentation of said oocytes or fertilized zygotes into a population of cytoplasts to;

10 fragmenting said population of oocytes or fertilized zygotes to produce a population of stained cytoplasts;

staining the DNA of a population of donor cells with a DNA stain having a second color to produce a population of stained donor cells having DNA stained with the second color;

15 fusing said population of stained cytoplasts and said population of stained donor cells in order to produce a population of cells comprising fusion products, unfused cytoplasts, unfused nuclear donors, wherein said fusion products comprise hybrid cells with a normal karyotype and aneuploidy cells;

sorting the population of cells by selecting by selecting for fusion products and unfused cytoplasts marked by the first color; and

20 further sorting the fusion products by selecting for cells with a normal karyotype marked by the second color.

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FIG. 1

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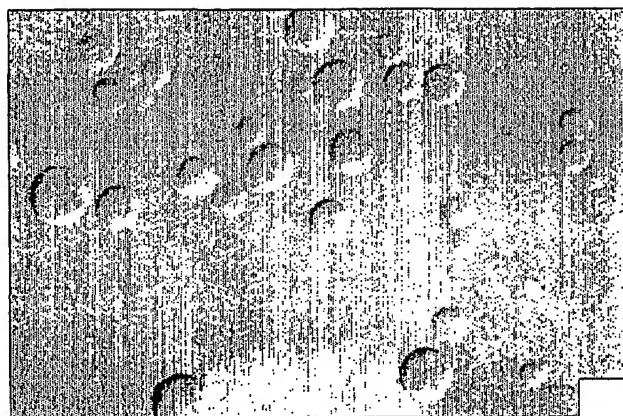


FIG.2A

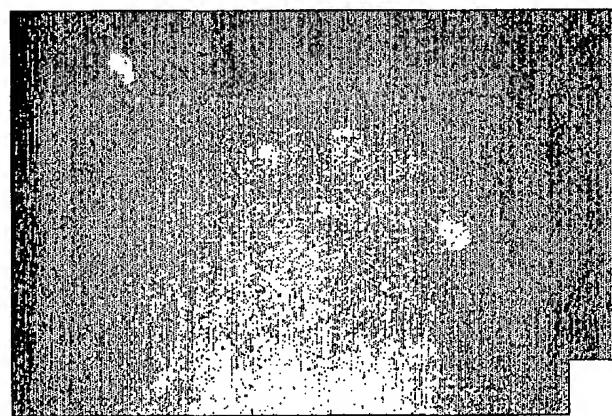


FIG.2B

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FIG.3A



FIG.3B

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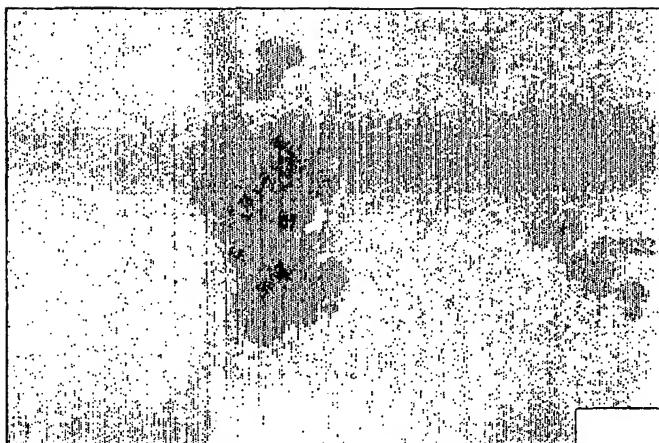


FIG.4A

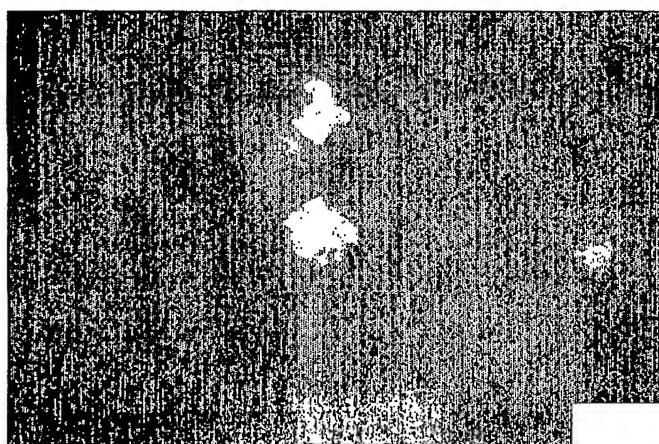


FIG.4B

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FIG. 5A



FIG. 5B

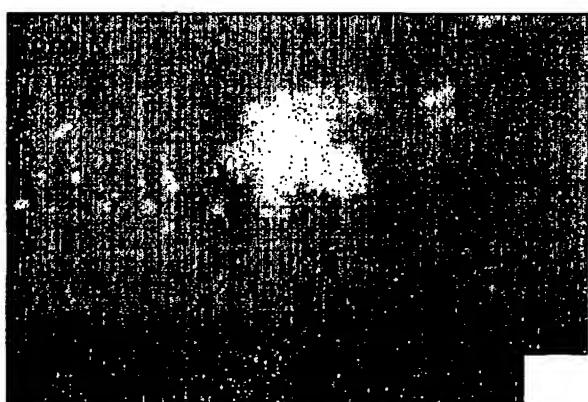


FIG. 5C

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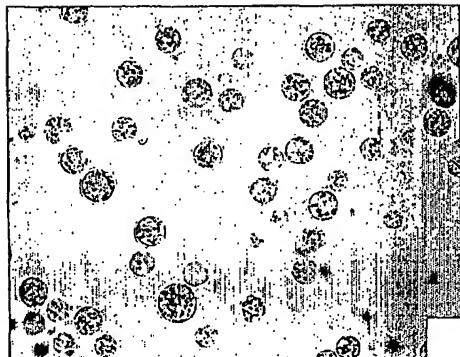


FIG.6A

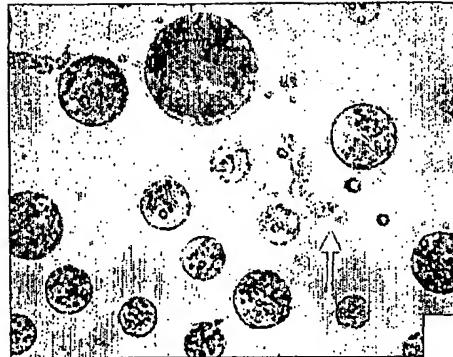


FIG.6B

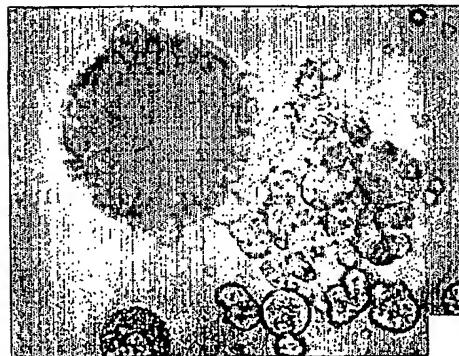


FIG.6C

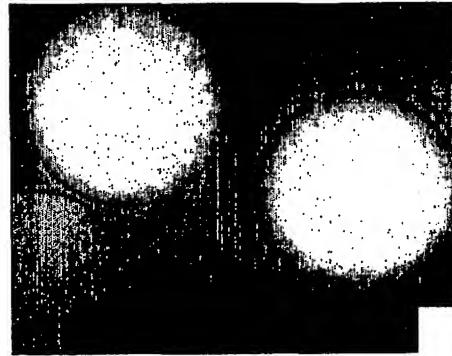


FIG.6D

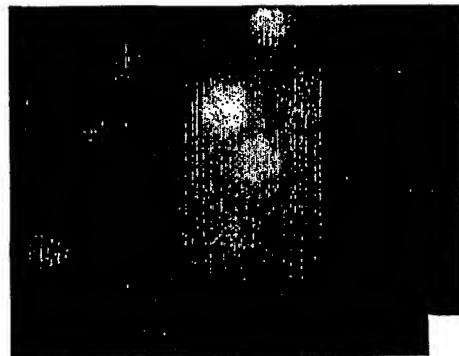


FIG.6E

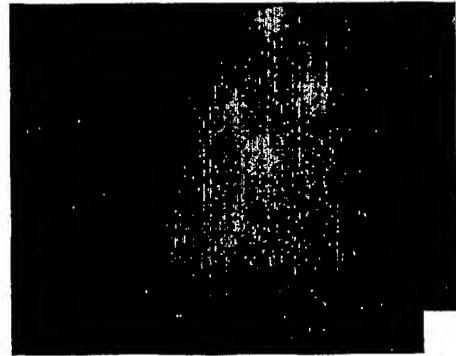
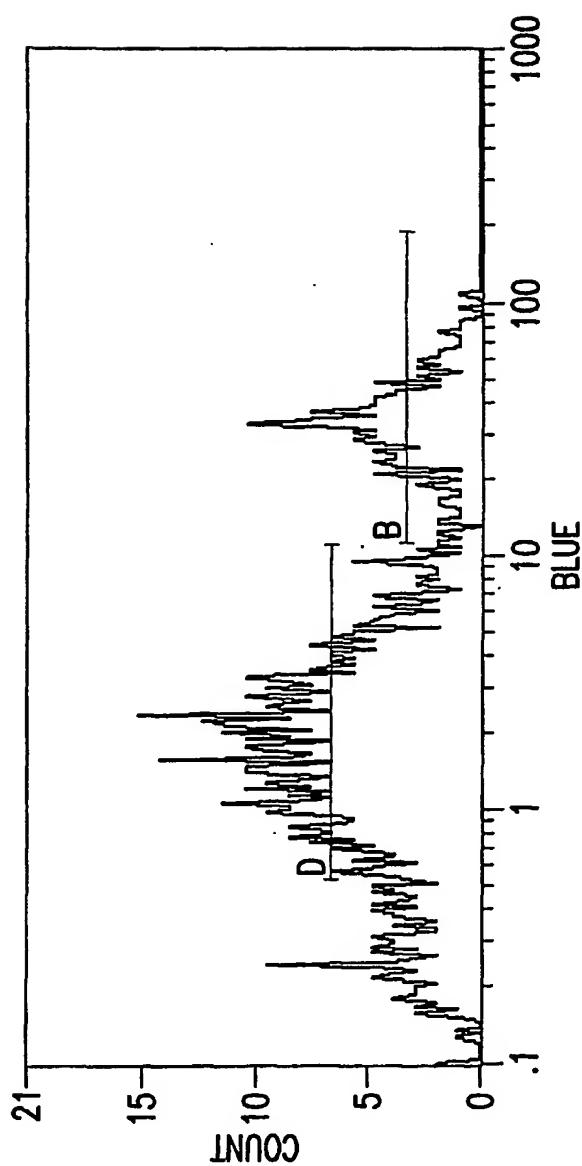


FIG.6F

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FACS ANALYSIS OF HYBRID CELL SORT WITH SELECTION FOR HOECHST 33342.
TWO PEAKS ARE SHOWN. PEAK D CORRESPONDS TO MONONUCLEATE HYBRID CELLS.
PEAK B CORRESPONDS TO MULTINUCLEATE HYBRID CELLS.

FIG. 7

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(54) Title: METHOD OF GENERATING PLURIPOTENT MAMMALIAN CELLS BY FUSION OF A CYTOPLAST FRAGMENT WITH A KARYOPLAST

(57) Abstract: The invention relates to a method of making pluripotent stem cells that does not involve the formation of early preimplantation embryos or fetal tissue. The method has general utility in the production of pluripotent stem cells from many mammalian species but has particular application in man where pluripotent stem cell production can be customized to particular human individual. The method involves the fusion of donor somatic or stem cells (or their karyoplasts) with cytoplasmic, membrane-delimited fragments of mammalian oocytes or zygotes. After the initial genomic reprogramming occurs, the cells can proliferate and thus multiply in vitro yielding a large number of autologous cells for cell therapy application. The result of this process is a cell population genetically identical to the somatic, differentiated cells derived from an individual patient. However, these cells are pluripotent in that upon application of specific growth factors, the cells are capable of differentiating into specific cell types as required by the sought clinical indication.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/US 01/19093

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
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B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
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Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, MEDLINE, PAJ, BIOSIS, CHEM ABS Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	<p>ZAKHARTCHENKO VALERI ET AL: "Karyoplast-cytoplasm volume ratio in bovine nuclear transfer embryos: Effect on developmental potential." <i>MOLECULAR REPRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT</i>, vol. 48, no. 3, 1997, pages 332-338, XP002195295 ISSN: 1040-452X abstract Materials and Methods figure 1</p> <p>-----</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-/-</p>	1,3,5, 7-15,17, 19

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Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	COLMAN A ET AL: "Therapeutic cloning: concepts and practicalities" TRENDS IN BIOTECHNOLOGY, ELSEVIER, AMSTERDAM, NL, vol. 18, no. 5, May 2000 (2000-05), pages 192-196, XP004195999 ISSN: 0167-7799 the whole document ----	1-45
A	STICE S L ET AL: "CLONING: NEW BREAKTHROUGHS LEADING TO COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES" THERIOGENOLOGY, LOS ALTOS, CA, US, vol. 49, no. 1, 1998, pages 129-138, XP002067435 ISSN: 0093-691X the whole document ----	1-45